

SR 161 Clear Lake Area - RDP Recommendations Meeting
Northwest Trek Forest Theatre – October 2, 2003
Meeting Summary

Community attendance:

Twenty community members signed in.

Stakeholder Committee attendance:

Bobbi Allison, Eatonville Planning Commission
Senator Marilyn Rasmussen
Dave Ellis, Northwest Trek

WSDOT staff attendance:

Vicki Steigner, Olympic Region Planning
John Donahue, Olympic Region Planning
Lynn Hakes, Olympic Region Planning

Meeting Purpose:

A public meeting was conducted on October 2nd in the Forest Theater at Northwest Trek near Eatonville to explain suggestions for improvements to SR 161 in the vicinity of Clear Lake. These suggestions were made during the initial round of public meetings about the Route Development Plan (RDP) held in April and June.

Study Background:

John Donahue began the meeting by explaining the purpose of the RDP and how it fits into the Washington State Department of Transportation's comprehensive plan for highways. The RDP is a twenty-year plan that enables WSDOT to make informed decisions about future highway needs, and present long range recommendations for improvements to the route. Solutions are generated with the input of the community and guidance of the Stakeholders' Committee.

The visions and goals of the study were explained, as well as the criteria used for evaluating the solutions which had been generated by the early public process. John presented charts showing current traffic congestion figures along the route, what congestion would look like in 20 years if no improvements were made to the route, and how the congestion would be reduced if the recommended solutions on SR 161 are implemented. He mentioned that the highway has been identified as a High Accident Corridor in the vicinity of the 352nd St. intersection.

Specific recommendations that have been determined over the course of the study were then explained. John described in some detail those solutions identified for the Clear Lake vicinity, including two passing lanes, one northbound and one southbound, and a climbing lane. These additional lanes are expected to provide congestion relief and mobility improvements in the area.

Bypass Route:

Lynn Hakes described another recommendation about a bypass route near Clear Lake. She explained that during the initial round of public meetings, a bypass route located to the west of the Clear Lake community was suggested. The idea had merit, as it could provide a more direct route on SR 161 for through traffic, and might eliminate the need for the climbing lane and impacts to wetlands and shoreline environment with constructions suggested along the existing route. Lynn explained that in order to choose a particular route for a bypass, an environmental corridor study would need to be completed. This study would, with the input of the public, identify several alternative routes and, along with the option of not building a bypass route, each would be



evaluated for the environmental impacts it would have. The corridor study process was briefly explained. Among the many environmental elements to be examined during the process, are impacts to poor or minority communities (environmental justice), cultural resources, wetlands, fish and wildlife and potential sites where hazardous materials might be encountered.

Public Involvement:

The meeting attendees assisted in identifying several areas of wetlands, a salmon bearing stream, wildlife habitat and corridors, an historic farmstead, three private cemeteries, a camp used by disadvantaged inter-city youth, a Native American fishing area where artifacts had been observed, and other environmental sites which would potentially be impacted by a bypass route.

The consensus of the meeting attendees was that, of the solutions presented for the Clear Lake vicinity, they preferred improvements to the existing route over a bypass of the Clear Lake community.

Conclusion:

John concluded the meeting by explaining that the community's recommendation for improvements to the current alignment, as opposed to the bypass route, would be presented to the steering committee during the next Stakeholder's meeting, scheduled for October 21st. This solution, along with other recommended improvements along the route, will be submitted for their endorsement. Following the Stakeholder's meeting, the recommended improvements to SR 161 will be presented to WSDOT management for their approval, and the RDP will be adopted and published in November.